

Jack Anderson

A 'Classic Study' in Labor Rackets

Two months ago, Salvatore Briguglio was gunned down, gangland style, on the streets of Manhattan. His murder, which remains unsolved, was no ordinary mob hit. He was a key suspect in the Jimmy Hoffa case.

Ostensibly, Briguglio was a business agent for Teamsters Local 560 in Union City, N.J. But his real duties apparently were more ominous; he was a reputed button man for the notorious "Tony Pro." The latter, known more formally as Anthony Provenzano, is the boss of Local 560 and an identified member of the Mafia.

Tony Pro is also a suspect in the Hoffa investigation. His late associate was shot, union sources believe, because he talked too much.

Men like Provenzano and Briguglio infest the labor unions in America. Several locals have been taken over by mobsters and hoodlums, who have turned them into criminal power bases.

As part of our continuing reports on organized crime, we have been writing lately about labor racketeering. Our findings have been reaffirmed by Justice Department organized crime experts, who have just testified before the Senate investigations subcommittee. Their message, delivered in grim language, was clear. Labor racketeering is flourishing in America.

Robert Stewart, head of the Newark, N.J., organized crime strike force, shed new light on Hoffa's disappearance. Apparently, Hoffa was liquidated by the mobsters he had befrien-

ded during his rise to power in the Teamsters union.

Not long after he vanished, reported Stewart, "the investigation focused upon suspects A and D." Our sources identified the two mysterious suspects as Provenzano and Briguglio.

Tony Pro seized control of Local 560 in 1961 after the violent elimination of his chief rival, Tony Castellito. Provenzano and Briguglio were charged with the murder.

According to the Senate testimony, Provenzano's 17-year reign of the union is "a classic study in labor racketeering." Here is a small part of the story, gleaned from Senate testimony, confidential Justice Department files and our own investigation:

- Ralph Picardo, a protected government witness, told investigators that he was recruited by Briguglio in the late 1960s for Tony Pro's gang. Picardo "was directed to participate in various organized thefts, hijackings and 'bust out' operations, all of which involved organized rings of professional criminals operating in multiple states in the Northeast."

- While Tony Pro served four years in prison for attempting to extort kickbacks from a trucking company, Local 560 salted away \$223,785 for him. He began collecting the cash during his final year in the slammer. The payments continued until he rejoined the union in 1975.

- In 1966, Briguglio and Provenzano's brother, Nunzio, were locked up for attempted extortion in another

labor shakedown scheme. According to Senate testimony, "both felons returned directly from prison to the local's payroll. In 1973, Briguglio was again jailed, this time for counterfeiting. But he was hired by the union as soon as his prison term ended in 1974."

- Three years ago, Briguglio and Provenzano allegedly agreed to fence \$1 million worth of securities and bonds stolen from separate victims in New York. "The boss and underboss of a different organized crime family were directly involved in the conspiracy to fence the stolen paper," it has been sworn.

- Provenzano was convicted last March of conspiring to arrange a kickback on a loan from the New York Teamsters Conference pension fund.

Hoover's Vendetta—Evidence has now boiled up from FBI files that the late J. Edgar Hoover pursued his vendetta against the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., even after the civil rights leader was in his grave.

A secret internal memo, dated March 11, 1969, reveals that for a year after his death, the FBI continued to attack the credibility of King's widow, Coretta, and his successor, Dr. Ralph Abernathy. The memo indicates that the electronic bugging of King's family and friends also continued after his death.

Hoover claimed the surveillance was instituted to determine whether King's organization had been infiltrated by communists. But the FBI chief circulated tidbits of gossip picked up about King's sex life.